

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously presented) A lift assembly adapted to be affixed to a vehicle for movement of a load between raised and lowered positions, said lift assembly comprising:

mounting structure attachable to said vehicle;

carriage structure associated with said mounting structure, said carriage structure movable along said mounting structure between a stowed position and a deployed position;

platform structure having opposite first and second sides and inboard and outboard ends, said platform structure being moveably coupled to said carriage structure for movement between raised and lowered positions and a stowable position existing in-between said raised and lowered positions;

first and second handrails pivotally coupled to said platform structure, said first and second handrails being movable between an extended position in which said first and second handrails extend upwardly from said platform structure, and a retracted position in which said first and second handrails are arranged along said first and second sides of said platform structure, respectively, wherein movement of at least one handrail to said extended position automatically locks said at least one handrail in said extended position; and

a handrail release lever associated with said platform structure, wherein movement of said handrail release lever unlocks said at least one handrail, thereby allowing said at least one handrail to move from said extended position to said retracted position.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously presented) The lift assembly of Claim 1, wherein said at least one handrail is locked in said extended position by a lock assembly, said lock assembly comprising:

a latch engagement member associated with said at least one handrail; and

a latch biased into engagement with said latch engagement member when said at least one handrail has attained said extended position, thereby locking said at least one handrail in said extended position.

4. (Previously presented) The lift assembly of Claim 3, wherein movement of said handrail release lever disengages said latch from said latch engagement member, thereby unlocking said at least one handrail so that said at least one handrail may articulate to said retracted position.

5. (Original) The lift assembly of Claim 4, further including handrail release linkage interconnecting said handrail release lever and said latch.

6. (Original) The lift assembly of Claim 1, wherein said first handrail is linked to said second handrail causing contemporaneous movement therewith.

7. (Previously presented) The lift assembly of Claim 1, wherein said first and second handrails are locked in said extended position by lock assemblies, each of said lock assemblies including:

a first link having first and second ends, said first link pivotally connected at said first end to said platform structure;

a second link having first and second ends, said second link pivotally connected at said first end to said second end of said first link and pivotally connected at said second end to said first or second handrail;

a latch pin connected to one of said links; and

a latch plate associated with said platform structure and biased into engaged with said latch pin, thereby locking said first or second handrail in said extended position.

8. (Previously presented) The lift assembly of Claim 1, further comprising a first drive assembly conditionally operated for effecting reciprocal movement of said carriage structure between said stowed and deployed positions, a second drive assembly conditionally operated for effecting reciprocal movement of said platform structure between said raised and lowered positions, and an electronic disabler for disabling the operation of either said first or said second drive assembly based on said position of said first or second handrail.

9. (Original) The lift assembly of Claim 1, further comprising an inboard barrier pivotally connected to said lift platform at said inboard end, said inboard barrier being movable between a bridge position, a safety barrier position, and a stowable position in which said platform structure may be moved by said carriage structure between said carriage stowed and carriage deployed positions.

10. (Original) The lift assembly of Claim 9, further comprising a lever linked to said inboard barrier for effecting movement of said inboard barrier between said bridge position and said safety barrier position, said lever being movable between a first position in which said inboard barrier is in said bridge position and a second position in which said inboard barrier is in said safety barrier position, wherein said lever includes a handle portion that may be grasped by an operator to manually manipulate said lever.

11. (Original) The lift assembly of Claim 10, wherein said lever may be locked in said second position, thereby locking said inboard barrier in said safety barrier position.

12. (Original) The lift assembly of Claim 11, wherein said lever includes a projection, said lever being locked by said projection extending into an opening in said platform structure.

13. (Original) The lift assembly of Claim 10, further comprising an electronic disabler for disabling the operation of said second drive assembly based on said position of said lever or said position of said inboard barrier.

14. (Original) The lift assembly of Claim 1, further comprising an outboard barrier pivotally connected to said platform structure at said outboard end, said outboard barrier movable between a ramp position and a safety barrier position.

15. (Original) The lift assembly of Claim 14, further comprising an outboard barrier locking latch associated with one side of said platform structure proximate said outboard end, said latch including an engagement structure, and a latch engagement member associated with said outboard barrier, said latch engagement member positioned and configured to cooperate with said engagement structure for locking said outboard barrier in said safety barrier position.

16. (Original) The lift assembly of Claim 15, wherein said engagement structure is a slot and said latch engagement member is a latch pin.

17. (Original) The lift assembly of Claim 14, further comprising an electronic disabler for disabling the operation of said first or said second drive assembly based on said position of said outboard barrier.

18-52. (Canceled)